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the NEW WAVE
AMERICA'S #1 TEAM
"WHEN A STRANGER COMES TO CALL!"

The PENUMBRA

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DEAD REDS: As i sit down to write, news has come of a nuclear power "accident" in Russia, with the dead numbered at either two (what the soviets are saying) or in the thousands (reports gathered from ham radio operators in the area). Radioactive waste is spewing into our atmosphere, 49,000 human beings in the immediate vicinity were not evacuated until they'd been exposed to hazardous levels of radioactivity for 36 hours due to soviet government foul-ups, all the animals within an 18 mile radius of the plant were destroyed because they were "contaminated," warnings have been issued in some Eastern European countries that rainwater and milk are unfit to drink and that people should avoid conceiving children until radiation levels drop, a group of American bone marrow transplant experts have been flown to Russia to try to save the "operable cases" of radiation contamination, the town of Pripyat (25,000 inhabitants) is abandoned, the Pripyat River is in danger of contaminating the Dnieper River and thence the water supply of Kiev, and on page four of my daily newspaper, a long article by American nuclear power "experts" tells me that not only are we all perfectly safe, but "it couldn't happen here."

I despise liars.

Meanwhile, not a single comic book company is taking out ads to eulogize dead Russians the way they did for the dead Challenger space shuttle crew. Maybe 'cause they're reds and this is a cold war, or maybe 'cause we like our dead heroes to be killed quickly, cleanly and in a blaze of glory — but for whatever reason, nobody is out there shedding tears for the firefighters who tried to contain the nuclear plant inferno ("30 meter high flames," according to the soviet news agency, Tass) while they sank into liquifying asphalt.

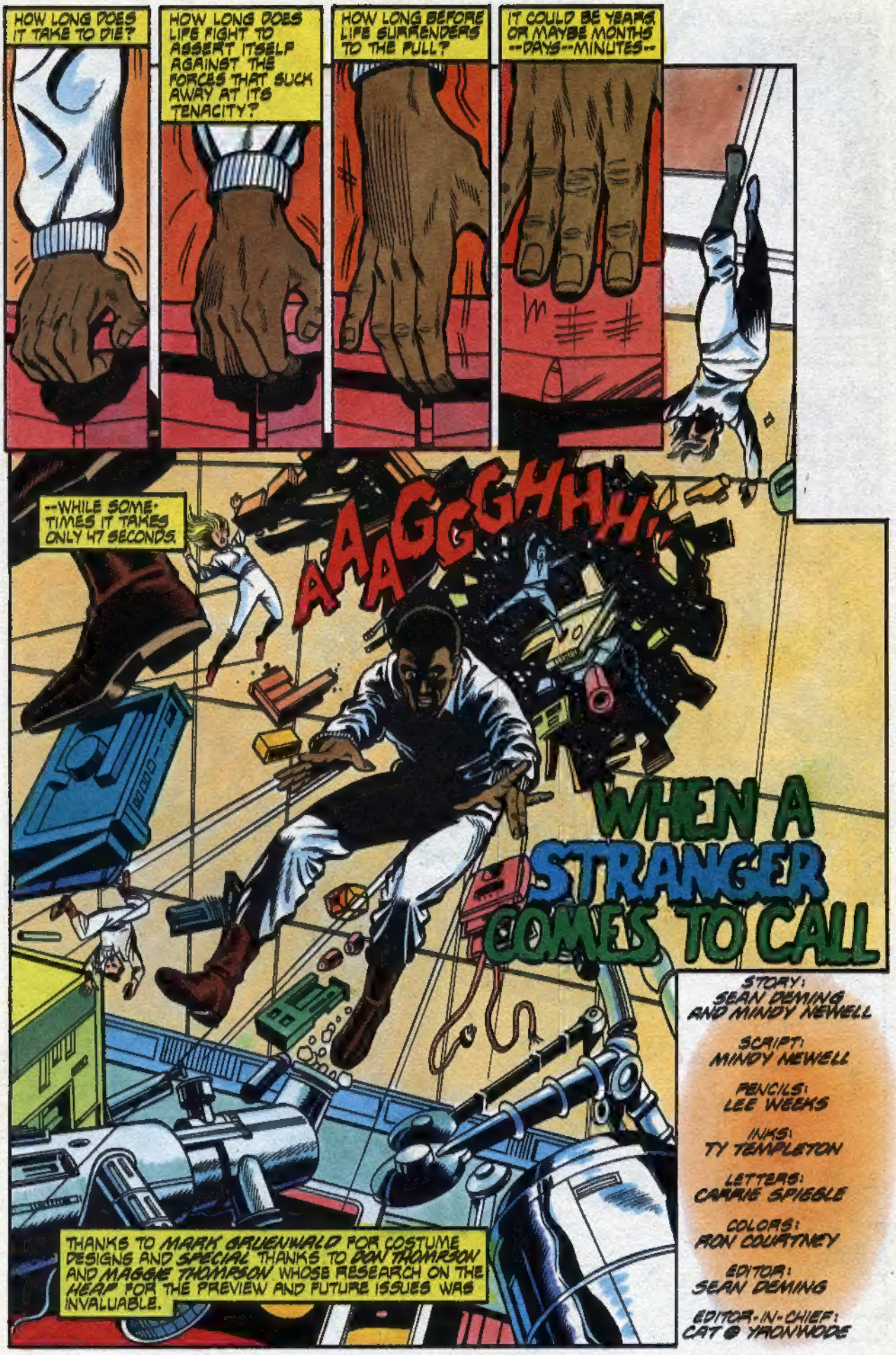
Does it matter that they were commies? Does it matter that they were victims of the most massive totalitarian slave-state the world has ever known? Does it matter that they probably believed that Science — that unholy god — was on their side?

I've got news for you, folks: Science isn't on ***anybody's*** side. Science is just the most workable way to learn about that thing us aging hipsters laughingly call "reality." The Laws of Science bind us to themselves, and we can never escape. Among the Laws are these: Hydrogen is quite explosive . . . and nuclear radiation is deadly. Hydrogen can be harnessed, through containment, but accidents will happen and people can die if they're involved in a hydrogen explosion. Nuclear radiation can be harnessed through containment too, but accidents will happen, and people can die if they're involved in a nuclear explosion, plant meltdown, radiation link, or contamination by fallout.

Consider the odds . . . i don't know about you, but i'd feel safer aboard a space shuttle right now than downwind from Chernobyl. Nuclear power will NEVER be safe. It's too bad so many reds had to die to prove that simple scientific law.

catherine yronwode

THE NEW WAVE™ no. 2, July 8, 1986. Published by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor-in-Chief. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Sean Deming, Editor. The New Wave, Tachyon, Polestar, Megabyte, Avalon, Impulse, and Dot TM Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. Story ©1986 Mindy Newell. Art ©1986 Lee Weeks and Ty Templeton. All other material ©1986 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. The stories, characters and events in this magazine are fictional. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada.


HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO DIE?
HOW LONG DOES LIFE FIGHT TO ASSERT ITSELF AGAINST THE FORCES THAT SUCK AWAY AT ITS TENACITY?
HOW LONG BEFORE LIFE SURRENDERS TO THE FULL?
IT COULD BE YEARS. OR MAYBE MONTHS --DAYS--MINUTES--
--WHILE SOMETIMES IT TAKES ONLY 47 SECONDS.
AAAGGGHHH!
WHEN A STRANGER COMES TO CALL
STORY: SEAN DEMING AND MINDY NEWELL
SCRIPT: MINDY NEWELL
PENCILS: LEE WEEKS
INKS: TY TEMPLETON
LETTERS: CARRIE SPIEGLE
COLORS: RON COURTNEY
EDITOR: SEAN DEMING
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: CAT ◎ YRONWODE
THANKS TO MARK GRUENWALD FOR COSTUME DESIGNS AND SPECIAL THANKS TO DON THOMPSON AND MAGGIE THOMPSON WHOSE RESEARCH ON THE HEAP FOR THE PREVIEW AND FUTURE ISSUES WAS INVALUABLE.

BUT THEN AGAIN...
FZZZZZ
...FOR THE LUCKY ONES...
...LIFE HANGS ON.
THUMP!
IT WORKED. THANK GOD, IT WORKED. WE DID IT, JAMES!
LESS THAN A MINUTE. LESS THAN A MINUTE FOR THE FORCE-FIELD TO REACT TO THE SUDDEN DROP IN PRESSURE. I HAD MY DOUBTS, BUT--
YEAH, YOU TWO CAN BE *REAL* PROUD OF YOURSELVES. LESS THAN A MINUTE... BUT HOW MANY *LIVES?*
WHERE'S JUNE? AND HORACE? AND ALL THE OTHERS?!
NANCY--
DON'T TOUCH ME, JAMES HOLMES! IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU TWO PULLING THAT BLUE-SKINNED MONSTER OUT OF WHO-KNOWS-WHERE INTO THE BOOTH IN THE *FIRST* PLACE, *NONE* OF THIS WOULD'VE HAPPENED!
EVERYONE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE! *EVERYONE* WOULD STILL BE HERE! *EVERYONE* WOULD STILL BE *SAFE!*
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MEN DECIDE TO CALL THEMSELVES GODS! KNOWLEDGE IS ONLY FOR THE OLYMPIANS! FOR THE *REST* OF US, *IGNORANCE* IS *BLISS!*
BE QUIET, NANCY. I'M THINKING.
2

NO, I WON'T BE QUIET!
YOU AND YOUR PLANS FOR WORLD DOMINATION! YOU USED JAMES AS MUCH AS YOU USED THE REST OF US! I WOULDN'T EVEN PUT IT PAST YOUR KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT WOULD HAPPEN!
I WISH I HAD.
OH, BULL! YOU KNEW ABOUT THAT ALIEN'S EXISTENCE! YOU KNEW ALL ABOUT THAT HYPER-UNIVERSE HE CAME FROM! YOU TOLD ME!
DID I?
WHAT'D YOU DO, MAKE SOME KIND OF DEAL WITH HIM? HE'S GOING TO CONQUER EARTH FOR YOU, IS THAT IT? SET YOU UP ON A THRONE?
OR IS HE THE ADVANCE SCOUT FOR AN INVASION FORCE? CLIFF, DON'T WALK AWAY FROM ME!...CLIFF!!... I'M NOT THROUGH!
JAMES... JIMBO...DON'T. DON'T LISTEN TO HER OLD MAN. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. IT COULDN'T BE HELPED.
TELL THAT TO HORACE, OR JUNE, OR ANY OF THE OTHERS. ASK THEM IF WE ARE FORGIVEN. MAYBE THEY WILL ANSWER YOU. THEY WON'T ANSWER ME.
JIMBO--
I KNOW. I'VE BEEN SITTING HERE TRYING. THEY WON'T ANSWER, CLIFF. THEY WON'T ANSWER.
THEY WON'T ANSWER... I KEEP TRYING...BUT THEY WON'T ANSWER...
PROUD OF YOURSELF, CLIFF?
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY, NANCY?
YOU DON'T FEEL ANY GUILT, DO YOU? YOU BASTARD!
MY CONCERN RIGHT NOW IS FOR THE LIVING. FOR JAMES.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CALLING SICKBAY. JAMES NEED SEDATION. I WANT HIM TO GET COMPLETE REST.
YEAH? I CAN'T HELP REMEMBERING WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME YOU HAD HIM UNDER SEDATION.
IT WAS FOR HIS OWN GOOD THEN. IT'S FOR HIS OWN GOOD NOW.
I BET. I GONNA KEEP MY EYES WIDE OPEN THIS TIME, CLIFFIE, OLD PAL.
3

THIS IS NOT A HOSPITABLE PLACE.
IT IS COLD. DESOLATE. BARREN.
NOT REALLY SO VERY LONG AGO THERE WAS COMPANIONSHIP.
NOW ALL ARE PASSED INTO HISTORY...
...WHILE IN THE PRESENT IS NOTHING BUT LONELINESS.

JAMES? JAMES, IT'S NANCY. CAN I COME IN?
BZZZ BZZZ
"JAMES? CAN YOU HEAR ME?"
BZZZZZ BZZZZZ
PLEASE, JAMES, DON'T BE ANGRY. I'M SORRY I--
SOMETHING WRONG, MISS DREISER?
HUH?-- WHA-??
HE'S UNDER SEDATION.
STILL? IT'S BEEN A WEEK.
SLEEP THERAPY IS A PRESCRIBED METHOD IN CASES LIKE THIS.
OH, WELL, HOW MUCH LONGER? THERE ARE SOME TECHNICAL MATTERS I NEED TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT.
I REALLY CAN'T SAY AT THIS TIME.
I SEE. WELL, WHEN HE WAKES UP LET ME KNOW. IT'S IMPORTANT.
YES, MISS DREISER. I'LL DO THAT.
UNHAPPY, AREN'T YOU, NANCY? AND BUSY. I CAN HEAR THOSE COGS AND WHEELS IN YOUR BRILLIANT MIND TURNING RIGHT NOW.
BUT YOU'RE NOT THE PROBLEM. YOU I CAN CONTROL. YOU CRAVE POWER AS MUCH AS I DO. BUT JAMES... CAN'T KEEP HIM ASLEEP FOREVER.
FOR JAMES, I NEED SOMETHING ELSE TO KEEP HIM IN LINE.
SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO HIM.

WEST ORANGE, N.J.:
LET'S GO. HANGING AROUND HERE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.
I THOUGHT YOU LIKED LIZ.
I DO. IT'S THAT CRAZY OLD GRANDMOTHER OF HER'S.
AH, SHE AIN'T SO BAD. HEY, DANNY, WHERE'S LIZ? SHE COMING?
YEAH, SHE'LL BE RIGHT OUT.
C'MON, WE'LL MEET HER AT THE COURTS. IT'S GETTING LATE, AND WE'LL LOSE THE HOOPS.
YOU GUYS GO AHEAD. I TOLD HER I WOULD WAIT FOR HER.
THE OLD LADY'S GIVING HER TROUBLE AGAIN, HUH?
SHE WON'T LET YOU WAIT INSIDE, WILL SHE? CRAZY OLD WITCH.
HURRY UP, MAN.
YEAH, YEAH. GO ON. WE'LL SEE YA THERE.
6

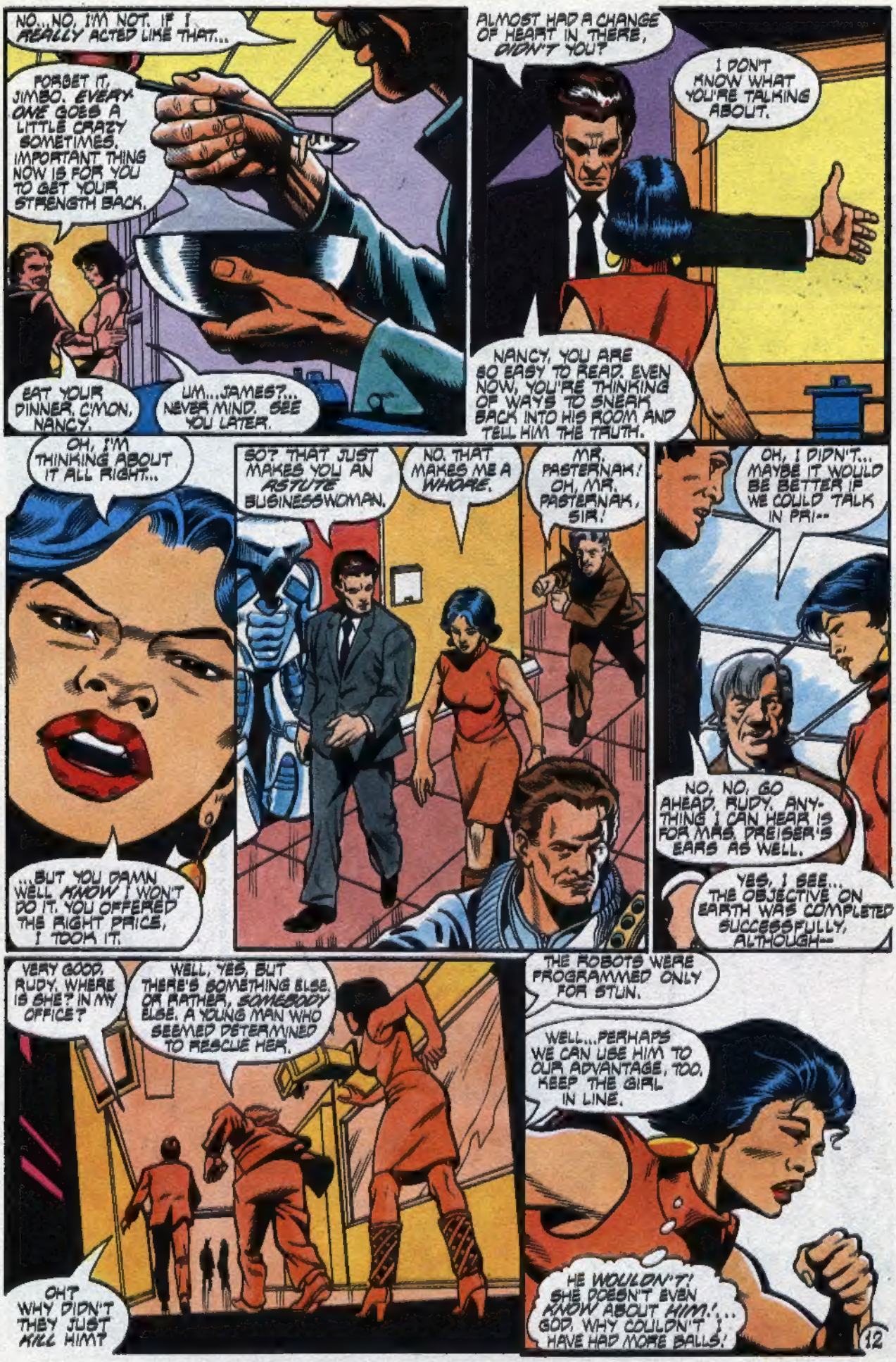
KAREEM GOES UP... HE MISSES!...THE BALL REBOUNDS TO DANNY BARKIN...HE FAKES AND...IT HITS THE RIM, BOUNCES... SWISH!
GRANDMA, PUH-LEESE!!
DON'T YOU TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME, YOUNG LADY! YOUR WHOLE CHEST IS SHOWING.
WHAT CHEST?
PUT A BRA ON!
YOU'LL BE SORRY! BY THE TIME YOU'RE MY AGE, THEY'LL BE HANGING DOWN TO YOUR BELLY-BUTTON.
IN MY CASE, IT'S AN OVER-THE-SHOULDER-PEBBLE-HOLDER.
I SHOULD BE SO LUCKY.
YOU THINK YOU'RE FUNNY, DON'T YOU?
DANNY'S WAITING FOR ME, GRANDMA.
HE CAN WAIT A FEW MINUTES LONGER. IF HE REALLY LIKES YOU, HE WON'T MIND.
NOW MARCH!
MARCH!!
BUT--
OH, ALL RIGHT.
JUST LIKE HER MOTHER. STRONG, PIG-HEADED...
...ALWAYS FIGHTING WITH ME... ALWAYS HAD TO HAVE HER OWN WAY ...SHE WOULDN'T LISTEN... WOULDN'T LET ME HELP HER...
...AND SO I LOST A DAUGHTER...
...BUT I DO HAVE ELIZABETH ...AND I'M GOING TO KEEP HER...
7

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, DAN, BUT GRANDMA MADE ME GO UP AND--
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WELCOME
WHOOPS!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
CHILL OUT, LIZZIE.
DON'T GIVE ME THAT.
WHAT IF SOMEBODY ELSE SAW YOU? WHAT IF GRANDMA HAD COME OUT INSTEAD OF ME? WHAT THEN? YOU'D HAVE A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO, BARKIN!
AH, PEOPLE ONLY SEE WHAT THEY WANT TO SEE. THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE WHAT THEY REALLY SAW.
YOU'RE A CYNIC, AND ASKING FOR TROUBLE.
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL, ANYWAY? TELEKINESIS SURE DIDN'T HURT URI GELLER.
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE? BEND SPOONS?
HE'S MADE MONEY FROM IT, HASN'T HE?
IT'S SURE A HELL OF A LOT SAFER THAN BEING A SUPER-HERO!
YOU--! YOU MEAN, NASTY--! GET AWAY FROM ME! SOME FRIEND!
HUH? WHAT'D I SAY-- UH-OH. LIZZIE, I'M SORRY. I FORGOT. HONEST.
HOW COULD YOU FORGET SOMETHING LIKE THAT? THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS HOW MY MOTHER DIED.
NOT THE WHOLE WORLD, LIZZIE...YOU HAVE TO FORGET. YOU HAVE TO LET GO. I DON'T MEAN NOT REMEMBER, BUT FORGET THE PAIN. JUST REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES, REMEMBER THAT SHE LOVED YOU.
IF SHE LOVED ME, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE DIED.
EVERYBODY DIES, LIZZIE.
8

DANNY!!?
I DON'T KNOW! AUH!!
WELCOME TO THE SUPER-HERO BUSINESS, DARKIN.
DANNY'S GONNA GET KILLED. I KNOW IT! I KNOW--
NOOOOO! GET AWAY! YOU'RE NOT REAL!!
ZZZZZZ
UHHHH
AGH!
9

HE'S MOVING AROUND...
...JAMES, WAKE UP...OPEN YOUR EYES, JAMBO...JAMES, DO YOU HEAR ME?
C'MON, OLD BUDDY, TIME'S A-WASTING...JAMES? YOU UP YET?
WHA' TIME ISSIT?...
I TOLD YOU, TIME FOR YOU TO GET UP.
CLIFF? THA' NANCY? ...SORRY, DON' FEEL SO GOOD.
SNAP!
IT'S ME, JIMBO, AND NOT FEELING GOOD IS NORMAL. WE'VE KEPT YOU UNDER SEDATION FOR TEN DAYS.
OWWW, MY HEAD ...TEN DAYS? WHY? WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
NOTHING, NOW. YOU JUST WENT A LITTLE CRAZY ON US.
CRAZY?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
NO...NOT CLEARLY...THE BOOTH...SOMETHING WENT WRONG WITH THE BOOTH... NANCY, YOU WERE THERE... AND YOU, CLIFF... WAIT...YES...
EAT YOUR SOUP, JIMBO. IT'S NAVY BEAN SOUP...YOUR FAVORITE.
I REMEMBER... THE ALIEN...THE HULL... HE SMASHED THROUGH THE HULL...HORACE... JUNE...OUR FAULT... YOUR FAULT, CLIFF...

YOU! TALKING ABOUT TAKING OVER THE WORLD ...BUT I STOPPED YOU, DIDN'T I?...RUINED YOUR PLANS...AND I'M GOING TO KEEP RUINING THEM...SEPARATION...YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME, CLIFF...IT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU COULD STOP ME... WILL STOP ME!
JAMES, JAMES, YOU'RE STILL NOT WELL. IT WAS FOR PRECISELY THIS REASON WE WERE FORCED TO SEDATE YOU.
YES, LISTEN TO US, JIMBO...
"...YOU WERE PUSHING YOURSELF TOO HARD. YOU WERE REFUSING TO TAKE BREAKS, REFUSING TO LEAVE. WE TRIED TO GET YOU TO SLEEP, BUT YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN."
"...SCREAMING ABOUT BLUE-SKINNED MONSTERS WHO COULD FLY AND WERE DANGEROUSLY STRONG AND HAD TO BE DESTROYED".
"YOU TRIED TO DESTROY THE BOOTH, JAMES. WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING TO SAVE THE PROJECT"..
"...WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING TO GET YOU BETTER. SO WE KEPT YOU SEDATED ...MAYBE IT WAS THE WRONG THING TO DO...
"...BUT WE DID IT OUT OF CONCERN AND FRIENDSHIP...BECAUSE WE WANTED TO HELP YOU".
"THE STRESS GOT TO YOU, JAMES, YOU STARTED HALLUCINATING"...
DON'T BE ANGRY.


NO...NO, I'M NOT. IF I REALLY ACTED LIKE THAT...
FORGET IT, JIMBO. EVERY-ONE GOES A LITTLE CRAZY SOMETIMES. IMPORTANT THING NOW IS FOR YOU TO GET YOUR STRENGTH BACK.
EAT YOUR DINNER, C'MON, NANCY.
UM...JAMES?... NEVER MIND. SEE YOU LATER.
ALMOST HAD A CHANGE OF HEART IN THERE, DIDN'T YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
NANCY, YOU ARE SO EASY TO READ. EVEN NOW, YOU'RE THINKING OF WAYS TO SNEAK BACK INTO HIS ROOM AND TELL HIM THE TRUTH.
OH, I'M THINKING ABOUT IT ALL RIGHT...
...BUT YOU DAMN WELL KNOW I WON'T DO IT. YOU OFFERED THE RIGHT PRICE, I TOOK IT.
SO? THAT JUST MAKES YOU AN ASTUTE BUSINESSWOMAN.
NO. THAT MAKES ME A WHORE.
MR. PASTERNAK! OH, MR. PASTERNAK, SIR!
OH, I DIDN'T... MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE COULD TALK IN PRI--
NO, NO, GO AHEAD, RUDY. ANY-THING I CAN HEAR IS FOR MRS. DREISER'S EARS AS WELL.
YES, I SEE... THE OBJECTIVE ON EARTH WAS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY, ALTHOUGH--
VERY GOOD, RUDY. WHERE IS SHE? IN MY OFFICE?
WELL, YES, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE, OR RATHER, SOMEBODY ELSE. A YOUNG MAN WHO SEEMED DETERMINED TO RESCUE HER.
OH!! WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST KILL HIM!!
THE ROBOTS WERE PROGRAMMED ONLY FOR STUN.
WELL...PERHAPS WE CAN USE HIM TO OUR ADVANTAGE, TOO. KEEP THE GIRL IN LINE.
HE WOULDN'T! SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT HIM.'... GOD, WHY COULDN'T I HAVE HAD MORE BALLS!
12

AH, ELIZABETH! IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU AT LAST! AND YOUR YOUNG FRIEND, AS WELL, ALTHOUGH UNFORTUNATELY YOU WEREN'T AS EXPECTED ...SO I HOPE YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS ARE SATISFACTORY? ELIZABETH'S WAS ALREADY AVAILABLE FOR HER, YOU SEE.
LOOK, MISTER, I DON'T KNOW WHO THE HELL YOU ARE, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE MESSING WITH! IF YOU DON'T LET US GO RIGHT NOW, I GUARANTEE THIS OFFICE IS GOING TO BE A BIG MESS!
SUCH A BRASH AND IMPULSIVE YOUNG MAN! ELIZABETH, YOU HAVE EXCELLENT TASTE, JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER... AND I MUST SAY HER COSTUME FITS YOU QUITE AS NICELY. OF COURSE, SHE DID FILL IT OUT A BIT MORE--
SHUT UP ABOUT MY MOTHER! WHERE'D YOU GET THIS, ANYWAY? YOU KILLED HER, DIDN'T YOU? WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE WE? YOU'D BETTER ANSWER! IF YOU KNOW ABOUT MY MOTHER, THEN YOU KNOW WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF DOING!
NOW, ELIZABETH, REALLY... DO YOU THINK I WOULD HAVE ARRANGED TO BRING YOU HERE IF I WANTED TO KILL YOU, OR YOUR FRIEND?
NO, YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG, LIZ. I CAN CALL YOU LIZ, CAN'T I? I FEEL AS IF I CAN, YOU SEE, YOUR MOTHER AND I WERE VERY CLOSE FRIENDS.
WHAT'S HE UP TO? WHY DID HE BRING ELIZABETH HERE? AND WHAT'S WITH THE COSTUME?
BEEP BEEP
THAT'S IT! YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, NOW, FELLA!!
I SAID YOU WERE IMPULSIVE, DIDN'T I? WHAT'S YOUR NAME, YOUNG MAN?
DANNY, DON'T! STOP! YOU'RE MAKING THINGS WORSE!
CALL ME WHATEVER YOU WANT, YOU JERK!
IF ELIZABETH DOES HAVE HER MOTHER'S GIFT...BUT THE POOR CHILD SEEMS TOO FRIGHTENED TO USE IT, LUCKY FOR US!
MR. PASTERNAK! THAT CREATURE WHO ESCAPED..
...HE'S ON HIS WAY BACK! SENSORS INDICATE ETA TWO MINUTES! AND THE LAB REPORTS THE HULL WON'T TAKE ANOTHER POUNDING!!
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NEXT ISSUE: THE DEFENSE SYSTEMS OF THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA GO TO **DEFCON THREE** AS CLIFF LAUNCHES HIS SCHEME FOR **WORLD POWER**. JAMES HOLMES HAS A CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE **THIRD** KIND, WHILE **TWO MORE** STRANGERS FIND THEMSELVES ON **"A SPACE STATION CALLED HELL!"**